

Department of Human Services

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Prepared by the
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A Detroit school board member denies allegations of child neglect

BY CHASTITY PRATT DAWSEY • FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER • April 3, 2008

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Detroit school board member Reverend David Murray said Wednesday he did not willfully neglect his six children, who were removed from his home last week by the state.

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Murray, 55, was in Wayne County Juvenile Court on Monday on charges from Children's Protective Services that he neglected his four adopted children, his daughter and stepson.

The children -- ages 2 to 16 -- were placed with relatives, Murray said. His wife, Tanisha, a 35-year-old homemaker, had complained that Murray kept their house in University District in disrepair, stored food in his car and did not regularly feed the children.

Murray, a social worker who was elected to the school board twice, said he believes his political critics encouraged his wife to file the charges after the children broke out several windows.

Murray, who was in special education as a child and later earned three master's and two bachelor's degrees, said his adopted children have special needs as well.

Murray said he was in the hospital with heart trouble when the windows were broken and the complaint filed. He confirmed that the home's roof and plumbing need repairs, but he said the family usually lived in another west-side home.

"The kids had food. I always made sure of that," Murray said. "All of those other allegations are just that, allegations."

The file was not available Wednesday in juvenile court, and a call to the Department of Human Services about the case was not returned.

Murray is to be in court April 18 for a preliminary hearing on whether the children should become wards of the state.

Contact **CHASTITY PRATT DAWSEY** at 313-223-4537.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080403/NEWS01/804030376>

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Thursday, April 3, 2008

Backers help pastor fix home after allegation

Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- Repairs were already being made on the blighted home of Detroit school board member Reverend David Murray on Wednesday following a report in The Detroit News that four of his children have been taken away by state Child Protective Services amid allegations of abuse and neglect.

Murray, 55, said members of the community stepped forward to pay for the repairs following the article. The report detailed allegations by family members and child protection workers that the licensed social worker and pastor of First Holy Temple Church of God in Christ withheld food from his wife and children though he received about \$2,000 per month in adoption subsidies for kids he adopted through the foster care system.

"People are helping me pay for stuff -- people love me," Murray said. "I really don't have no enemies, everybody loves me."

The agency was tipped off by Murray's wife, Tanisha Murray, who said she was pushed to file the complaint by escalating problems in the home, which she said included domestic violence and constant tensions over how little there was to eat. The children generally received about one meal per day, she said.

Wayne County Juvenile Court Referee Leslie Graves determined at a hearing Monday that there is enough evidence against Murray to proceed to trial, and he's awaiting a preliminary hearing on April 18.

Find this article at:

<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080403/METRO/804030382>

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Kevin Lounsbury to serve five to 15 years for criminal sexual conduct

Wednesday, April 2, 2008 2:48 PM EDT

CHARLEVOIX — A judge has sentenced a Boyne City man to prison after he recently pleaded guilty to a charge stemming from allegations that he repeatedly sexually abused a child over an extended period of time.

Charlevoix County Prosecutor John Jarema said on Friday Charlevoix County Circuit Court Judge Richard M. Pajtas sentenced Kevin Jerome Lounsbury, 38, to serve five to 15 years in prison after he pleaded guilty to a charge of third degree criminal sexual conduct.

Jarema said Lounsbury estimated the number of times he had abused the child — who was between the ages of 13 and 16 — to be “hundreds.”

Lounsbury’s plea was part of a plea agreement with the prosecutor’s office. In exchange for his guilty plea several other charges, including first degree charge which carries a penalty of up to life in prison, was dismissed.

“We’re always grateful when a victim does not have to testify,” Jarema said.

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Governor urges residents to take one deliberate action to protect children

Wednesday, April 2, 2008 10:49 AM EDT

LANSING - Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm has declared April Child Abuse Prevention Month in Michigan, urging residents to take one deliberate action to protect children.

"Child abuse and neglect hurt everyone," said Ismael Ahmed, director of the Department of Human Services. "Prevention is a shared responsibility. We rely on everyone to help protect Michigan's children."

The Children's Trust Fund is a statewide non-profit organization that is dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect.

Housed administratively within the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Trust Fund works in partnership with its 72 local councils to serve 82 of Michigan's 83 counties.

Local councils are independent, community-based organizations that identify needs and facilitate collaborative prevention programs for children and families in their community.

"The real work of prevention happens at the local level," CTF Executive Director Richard Bearup said. "There are literally thousands of dedicated volunteers and professionals working to make children's lives better and safer."

Many local councils are planning events in their communities to draw attention to the impact of child abuse and neglect.

New this year will be a 5K run/walk at the state Capitol in Lansing at on April 13.

For registration and more information about all the events, go to www.michigan.gov/ctf.

Michigan taxpayers are encouraged to join in the fight against child abuse and neglect by donating via their tax returns.

Individuals can designate a \$5 contribution or more on their Michigan income tax forms.

All donations go directly to the Children's Trust Fund.

"If someone wants to help, but can't afford a donation, there is always a need for volunteers," Bearup said. "I encourage everyone to contact their local prevention programs and find out how they can help."



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Shining light on child abuse `Hope' event educates about mistreatment and neglect

Thursday, April 03, 2008

BY LYNN TURNER

lturner@kalamazoogazette.com

388-8564

KALAMAZOO -- In 1967, before she was a judge or attorney, Patricia N. Conlon was a social worker with the state's Children's Protective Services agency in Wayne County.

"This was the Dark Ages for child abuse," she said Wednesday night during a "Light of Hope" ceremony in Bronson Park for victims and survivors of child abuse and neglect. "And frankly, folks, I think we're still in the Middle Ages."

Every four minutes, a child is abused, according to one statistic Conlon cited. Many abused children are involved in divorce cases where parents verbally bash one another, which can hurt a child as much as physical abuse, she said.

Sexual abuse of children continues, Conlon said. Substance abuse, whether by a parent before or after a child is born, can have far-reaching and long-term effects, she said.

The Kalamazoo County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), the Kalamazoo County Child Abuse and Neglect Council and Legal Aid of Western Michigan, which sponsored Wednesday's program and candle-lighting ceremony, are trying to increase awareness of abuse problems as well as prompt more people to volunteer with the organizations.

CASA trains volunteers to work with children involved in abuse and neglect cases, assess their situations and give judges regular reports.

Last year 22 active CASA volunteers put in more than 1,400 hours of work to help 53 children, said Jaime McCrank, the organization's director. That helped about 6 percent of the children involved in cases.

Laura Sutherland, a graduate student at Western Michigan University, started as a CASA volunteer in October and now is involved in a case with one child.

"The judge wants your recommendations," she said. "It's tough, and you hear some horrible things ... (but) I enjoy working with the court system and the kids."

James Henry, co-director of the Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center, said the night's ceremony was about ending the secrecy of abuse and honoring the survivors.

"It's to recognize and appreciate their pain and our pain," he said. "And we share it."

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April 3, 2008

Abuse, neglect seen in 30,000 newborns, government reports

Midday update

Mike Stobbe
Associated Press

ATLANTA - About 1 in 50 U.S. infants are victims of nonfatal child abuse or neglect in a year, according to the first national study of the problem in that age group.

The study focused on children younger than 1 year, and found nearly a third were 1 week old or younger when the abuse or neglect occurred.

"It is a particularly vulnerable group," said study co-author Rebecca Leeb, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We were struck by the fact there was a clustering of maltreatment with the very, very early age group."

The researchers counted more than 91,000 infant victims of abuse and neglect in the period Oct. 1, 2005 to Sept. 30, 2006.

The information came from a national data base of cases verified by protective services agencies in 45 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Other studies have looked at national child abuse and neglect cases, but this is believed to be the first to focus on infants, said Leeb, a CDC epidemiologist.

The 91,000 infants were age 1 year or younger. About 30,000 of those cases were infants aged one week or younger. About 68 percent of those cases were attributed to neglect.

Federal officials define neglect as a failure to meet a child's basic needs including housing, clothing, feeding and access to medical care. But the counted cases did not include new parents stumbling their way through breast-feeding or making other rookie mistakes.

"Things like abandonment and newborn drug addiction would qualify as neglect, not things like parents learning how to be parents," Leeb said.

Medical professionals identified about 65 percent of the maltreated newborns to protective services staff. The others came from law enforcement, relatives, friends, neighbors and from protective services staff.

The results mirror what a study in Canada found, Leeb said.

The CDC collaborated on the study with the federal Administration for Children and Families.

USA 2008: The Great Depression

Food stamps are the symbol of poverty in the US. In the era of the credit crunch, a record 28 million Americans are now relying on them to survive – a sure sign the world's richest country faces economic crisis

By David Osborne in New York
Tuesday, 1 April 2008

We knew things were bad on Wall Street, but on Main Street it may be worse. Startling official statistics show that as a new economic recession stalks the United States, a record number of Americans will shortly be depending on food stamps just to feed themselves and their families.

Dismal projections by the Congressional Budget Office in Washington suggest that in the fiscal year starting in October, 28 million people in the US will be using government food stamps to buy essential groceries, the highest level since the food assistance programme was introduced in the 1960s.

The increase – from 26.5 million in 2007 – is due partly to recent efforts to increase public awareness of the programme and also a switch from paper coupons to electronic debit cards. But above all it is the pressures being exerted on ordinary Americans by an economy that is suddenly beset by troubles. Housing foreclosures, accelerating jobs losses and fast-rising prices all add to the squeeze.

Emblematic of the downturn until now has been the parades of houses seized in foreclosure all across the country, and myriad families separated from their homes. But now the crisis is starting to hit the country in its gut. Getting food on the table is a challenge many Americans are finding harder to meet. As a barometer of the country's economic health, food stamp usage may not be perfect, but can certainly tell a story.

Michigan has been in its own mini-recession for years as its collapsing industrial base, particularly in the car industry, has cast more and more out of work. Now, one in eight residents of the state is on food stamps, double the level in 2000. "We have seen a dramatic increase in recent years, but we have also seen it climbing more in recent months," Maureen Sorbet, a spokeswoman for Michigan's programme, said. "It's been increasing steadily. Without the programme, some families and kids would be going without."

But the trend is not restricted to the rust-belt regions. Forty states are reporting increases in applications for the stamps, actually electronic cards that are filled automatically once a month by the government and are swiped by shoppers at the till, in the 12 months from December 2006. At least six states, including Florida, Arizona and Maryland, have had a 10 per cent increase in the past year.

In Rhode Island, the segment of the population on food stamps has risen by 18 per cent in two years. The food programme started 40 years ago when hunger was still a daily fact of life for many Americans. The recent switch from paper coupons to the plastic card system has helped remove some of the stigma associated with the food stamp programme. The card can be swiped as easily as a bank debit card. To qualify for the cards, Americans do not have to be exactly on the breadline. The programme is available to people whose earnings are just above the official poverty line. For Hubert Liepnieks, the card is a lifeline he could never afford to lose. Just out of prison, he sleeps in overnight shelters in Manhattan and uses the card at a Morgan Williams supermarket on East 23rd Street. Yesterday, he and his fiancée, Christine Schultz, who is in a wheelchair, shared one banana and a cup of coffee bought with the 82 cents left on it.

"They should be refilling it in the next three or four days," Liepnieks says. At times, he admits, he and friends bargain with owners of the smaller grocery shops to trade the value of their cards for cash, although it is illegal. "It can be done. I get \$7 back on \$10."

Richard Enright, the manager at this Morgan Williams, says the numbers of customers on food stamps has been steady but he expects that to rise soon. "In this location, it's still mostly old people and people who have retired from city jobs on stamps," he says. Food stamp money was designed to supplement what people could buy rather than covering all the costs of a family's groceries. But the problem now, Mr Enright says, is that soaring prices are squeezing the value of the benefits.

"Last St Patrick's Day, we were selling Irish soda bread for \$1.99. This year it was \$2.99. Prices are just spiralling up, because of the cost of gas trucking the food into the city and because of commodity prices. People complain, but I tell them it's not my fault everything is more expensive."

The US Department of Agriculture says the cost of feeding a low-income family of four has risen 6 per cent in 12 months. "The amount of food stamps per household hasn't gone up with the food costs," says Dayna Ballantyne, who runs a food bank in Des Moines, Iowa. "Our clients are finding they aren't able to purchase food like they used to."

And the next monthly job numbers, to be released this Friday, are likely to show 50,000 more jobs were lost nationwide in March, and the unemployment rate is up to perhaps 5 per cent.



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MIRS

March 31, 2008

Three Out Of Four Needy Getting Food

Michigan leads the nation's largest states and is 10th among all 50 states in making sure needy families

are participating in its Food Assistance Program, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service estimates that, in Michigan, more than 75 percent of persons that

qualify for food assistance received it during 2005, which exceeds the national average by 10 points and

is ahead of other large states. The report graded Michigan in a tie with Illinois with the highest

participation among the seven Great Lakes states.

Since the 2005 USDA estimate, Michigan has added more than 200,000 people to its Food Assistance rolls.

An internal Department of Human Services (DHS) analysis shows participation may reach 95 percent of

eligible people as of 2008, according to DHS Director Ismael **AHMED**.

By USDA standards in 2005, Michigan provided benefits to both 75 percent of all eligible persons and the

same percent of working poor recipients. Michigan used these tools to reach eligible participants:

- Outreach programs through the Elder Law and MiCAFE programs that reach older adults

- Outreach through Saginaw-based Center for Civil Justice, a statewide organization that promotes benefits for low-income residents

- Outreach through WIC offices, Food Bank Council of Michigan, regional food banks, Senior Farmers'

Market Nutrition Program, Project Fresh, Meals on Wheels and similar outlets.



Print Page

Michigan leads large states in feeding citizens

Wednesday, April 2, 2008 10:49 AM EDT

LANSING - Michigan leads the nation's largest states in insuring needy families have access to food, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Michigan has the largest percentage of families participating in its Food Assistance Program of the largest states and ranks 10th overall among states in participation.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service estimates that, in Michigan, more than 75 percent of persons who qualify for food assistance received it during 2005, the year covered in the report.

This exceeds the national average by 10 points and is ahead of other large states.

The report graded Michigan in a tie with Illinois with the highest participation among the seven Great Lakes states.

"Our goal is to protect Michigan's families," said Ismael Ahmed, director of the Department of Human Services. "The Food Assistance Program insures that families and children have food on the table. Few services provide a more direct and important impact."

Since the 2005 USDA estimate, Michigan has added more than 200,000 people to its Food Assistance rolls.

"An internal DHS analysis shows greater participation than the federal report," Ahmed said. "It shows we may reach 95 percent of eligible persons today."

By USDA standards in 2005, Michigan provided benefits to both 75 of all eligible persons and the same percent of working poor recipients.

Niles Daily Star

ONLINE EDITION

Print Page

Once or twice a month, is there really a difference?

Wednesday, April 2, 2008 11:05 AM EDT

For many who receive food assistance from the state, the last two weeks of before their card activates is a long wait.

As soon as the money is in the account, they purchase needed items and often the money is depleted until the next month.

The Michigan Department of Human Services is considering having the distribution of benefits changed from once a month to twice a month, for those receiving more than \$100 a month.

Food assistance benefits are activated electronically on a debit-type card in one of the first nine days of the month, depending on their case number.

The new legislation would change distribution to twice monthly, once each in the beginning and middle of the month.

Part of the rationale for the change would be to encourage more fresh fruit and vegetables in clients' diets spread throughout the month.

Out of the 586,000 cases with 1.2 million receiving food assistance in the state, this change would affect about 457,000 cases or 78 percent of the current caseload.

The department conducted a survey of some of its clients in 120 county and local offices on whether they would like this change. This was then sent to a national firm to tabulate the results and return its findings to Michigan in April.

What these people really could have used was the money spent on this unnecessary survey.

The benefits are not enough to feed a recipient or family for an entire month.

Whether they purchase more when the card is activated or wait until the end of the month isn't a question of what they would prefer - it is out of necessity.

The average benefit per person is greater than \$99 and about \$230 per family. Anyone who has shopped recently knows the price of food has risen with the staples of fresh produce, milk and bread leading the list.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture pays for 100 percent of the program most know as food stamps, with the state and federal governments sharing administrative costs.

DHS staff persons statewide determine eligibility for applicants and perform case management.

You have to wonder just how much money could go toward actual benefits is wasted by ideas such as this survey.



Mel Trotter food drive under way

Thursday, April 03, 2008

GRAND RAPIDS -- City police and firefighters are coordinating a two-week community food drive to stock the shelves at Mel Trotter Ministries. Through April 17, donations of food goods can be placed in blue collection barrels at all fire stations, in the lobby of the police department at 1 Monroe Center NW, and at the Customer Service Information Center at City Hall, 300 Monroe Ave. NW.

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Article published Apr 3, 2008

Police: Man bites wife in driving dispute

A Southfield man was arrested after he and his wife abandoned their vehicle at 11 Mile and Southfield following an argument about money, according to Lathrup Village police.

The couple was at the intersection about 3:45 p.m. Sunday when the argument developed, said Detective Scott McKee.

The man, a passenger in the vehicle, is accused of biting his wife's hand as she attempted to keep him from taking the keys from the ignition, the detective said. His shirt was torn, McKee said, while her hand was bloody.

"When officers arrived," McKee said, "nobody was in the car, and it was parked." Officers found the man walking west on 11 Mile, while the woman was going south on Southfield.

The man, in his 40s, was not identified pending arraignment on a single charge of domestic assault, McKee said.

THE MINING Journal

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U.P. jobless rate among highest

POSTED: April 3, 2008

MARQUETTE — The Upper Peninsula had one of the highest regional unadjusted jobless rates in the state for February, the most recent timeframe available.

The jobless rate in the U.P. was 9.2 percent, up from 8.8 percent in January, according to Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

Only the northeast Lower Peninsula at 13 percent, northwest Lower Peninsula at 9.8 percent and Flint at 9.5 percent were higher, the state said.

Regional unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted. But national and state unemployment rates are adjusted to remove seasonal influences.

Michigan's seasonally adjusted jobless rate in February was the highest in the nation at 7.2 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The national unemployment rate was 4.8 percent in February, according to the BLS.

The state's major labor market areas, their seasonally unadjusted jobless rates for February and the change since January:

- ≤ Ann Arbor, 5 percent, up from 4.8 percent.
- ≤ Battle Creek, 7.4 percent, up from 7.2 percent.
- ≤ Bay City, 7.7 percent, up from 7.6 percent.
- ≤ Detroit-Warren-Livonia, 7.7 percent, down from 8.2 percent.
- ≤ Flint, 9.3 percent, down from 9.5 percent.
- ≤ Grand Rapids-Wyoming, 6.5 percent, up from 6.3 percent.
- ≤ Holland-Grand Haven, 6.5 percent, up from 6.1 percent.
- ≤ Jackson, 8.3 percent, up from 8 percent.

≤ Kalamazoo-Portage, 6.3 percent, up from 6 percent.

≤ Lansing-East Lansing, 6.4 percent, up from 6.1 percent.

≤ Monroe, 7.6 percent, down from 8 percent.

≤ Muskegon-Norton Shores, 7.9 percent, up from 7.5 percent.

≤ Niles-Benton Harbor, 7.9 percent, up from 7.6 percent.

≤ Saginaw-Saginaw Township North, 8.1 percent, down from 8.2 percent.

≤ Upper Peninsula, 9.2 percent, up from 8.8 percent.

≤ Northeast Lower Michigan, 13 percent, up from 12.4.

≤ Northwest Lower Michigan, 9.8 percent, up from 9.2 percent.

Source: Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

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The Crypt

April 02, 2008

Activists: States failing to comply with motor voter law

States across the country are failing to comply with a provision of the 1993 National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) – better known as the “motor voter law” -- that requires them to offer registration materials to clients at public assistance agencies such as welfare offices, voting rights activists told a House panel this week

Non-partisan voting rights organizations Project Vote and Demos, which recently put out a joint **report** on the topic, contended in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Elections that the wide disparity in voter registration between lower and upper income Americans is partly the result of the states doing more to provide registration materials at departments of motor vehicles than at welfare offices.

“Forty percent of voting eligible Americans who live in households making less \$25,000 per year are not registered,” Michael Slater, deputy director of Project Vote, told Politico. “By comparison,” he said, “20 percent of people making more than \$100,000 are unregistered.”

Catherine Truss, a departmental specialist for the Michigan Department of Human Services, said that making voter registration part of social service delivery is not just good for democracy but an important step toward the self-sufficiency welfare agencies seek to instill in their clients. “Compliance with the National Voter Registration Act is not just another federal mandate; it is a key component for families to act on their own behalf and become part of the public debate,” said Truss.

David Muhlhausen, a policy analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation, argued that there isn’t good evidence that failure to provide the forms at social service offices was hurting low-income voter registration. He said that a marked decline in voter registrations at social service offices was likely the result of welfare reform’s having created fewer welfare recipients.

But Rep. Artur Davis (D-Alabama) engaged in a spirited debate with Muhlhausen, saying, “I blame welfare reform for many things, and maybe now this is another one.”

Slater also noted that the states of California and Oregon are registering comparable numbers of voters at social service agencies when California, because of its much greater population, clearly has more welfare recipients. “There’s a significant difference on implementation,” Slater concluded.

Slater charged the Department of Justice with being more interested in shrinking voter rolls than growing them. Noting the paucity of lawsuits filed to enforce the motor voter law, Slater said: “The Justice Department has not pursued this section of the NVRA during the whole Bush administration but has been very vigorous in pursuing voter purging.”

By Ben Adler 03:54 PM

County resident receives state award

A Jerome woman was among recipients of Star Awards from the Michigan Department of Human Services.

Advertisement

The awards were presented during the department's annual employee award program April 1 in Lansing. The winners represent 45 different communities around the state.

"Star Award winners represent the best and brightest," DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said. "These people go above and beyond to help coworkers, their clients and the public better access benefits in our system. They help define the DHS as an engine for good in Michigan."

Merry Stuard of Jerome was part of the 80-member Bridges Test Team that tested applications on the upcoming Bridges eligibility and payment program to determine its fit for employees and to help debug problems before the computerized application goes online.

For more information go to www.michigan.gov/dhs.

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Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

**Michigan Department of Human Services
summarily suspends
the group child care home license,
#DG500269840, of Shannon Jacob**

April 3, 2008

The Michigan Department of Human Services, Bureau of Children and Adult

Licensing, issued an order of summary suspension and notice of intent to revoke the license of Macomb County group child care home provider Shannon

Jacob, 24457 Kolleen Lane, Clinton Township, Michigan. This action resulted

from a recent investigation of a complaint of the group child care home.

The April 2, 2008, complaint investigation found violations of the Child Care Organizations Act and administrative rules regarding caregiver qualifications and supervision. BCAL took emergency action to protect the health, welfare, and safety of children.

Effective 6 p.m., April 2, 2008, the summary suspension order prohibits Shannon Jacob from operating a group child care home at 24457 Kolleen Lane,

Clinton Township, Michigan, or at any other address or location.

Accordingly, she may not accept children for care after that date and time.

The order also requires Ms. Jacob to inform all of the parents of children in her care that her license has been suspended and that she can no longer provide child care.

Ms. Jacob has held a license to operate a group child care home since October 27, 2004. The license was for 12 children.

Michigan law defines a group child care home as a private home in which more than six but not more than 12 minor children are given care and supervision for periods of less than 24 hours a day, unattended by a parent or legal guardian, except children related to an adult member of the family by blood, marriage, or adoption. Group child care home includes a home that gives care to an unrelated minor child for more than four weeks during a calendar year.

For more information, consult DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/dhs

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Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Michigan Department of Human Services Summarily Suspends the Group Day Care Home License, #DG610269149, of Amy German

April 3, 2008

The Michigan Department of Human Services, Bureau of Children and Adult

Licensing, issued an order of summary suspension and notice of intent to revoke the license of Muskegon County group day care home provider Amy German, 2322 Stevens Creek Court, Fruitport, Michigan. This action resulted

from a recent investigation of a complaint of the child day care group home.

The April 1, 2008, complaint investigation found violations of the Child Care Organizations Act and administrative rules regarding supervision, caregiver responsibilities, infant sleeping, and training. BCAL took emergency action to protect the health, welfare, and safety of children.

Effective 6 p.m., April 1, 2008, the Summary Suspension Order prohibits Amy

German from operating a group day care home at 2322 Stevens Creek Court, Fruitport, Michigan, or at any other address or location. Accordingly, she may not accept children for care after that date and time. The order also requires Ms. German to inform all of the parents of children in her care that her license has been suspended and that she can no longer provide day care.

Ms. German has held a license to operate a group day care home since August

18, 2004. The license was for twelve children.

Michigan law defines a group day care home as a private home in which more than six but not more than 12 minor children are given care and supervision for periods of less than 24 hours a day, unattended by a parent or legal guardian, except children related to an adult member of the family by blood, marriage, or adoption. Group day care home includes a home that gives care to an unrelated minor child for more than four weeks during a calendar year.

For more information, consult DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/dhs.

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Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet or Colleen Steinman (517) 373-7394

Michigan DHS outlines civic engagement initiative before Congress

April 2, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Voting helps people move toward self-sufficiency. That's the message a Michigan Department of Human Services official told a Congressional panel on Tuesday.

Catherine Truss, civic engagement project manager, outlined DHS' efforts to make voter registration applications accessible to clients and others who have contact with the agency's network of 120 offices in Michigan's 83 counties.

Speaking before the House of Representatives subcommittee on elections, Truss explained that each local county office has identified a key staff member to manage activities that encourage civic engagement and participation in self-governance.

"Voting is a critical way to have a voice in the very decisions that directly impact people living in poverty," Truss said. "By providing and accepting voter registration applications we empower people who often have been disenfranchised."

The staff members assigned civic engagement duties will be trained and will be provided outreach materials such as posters. Voter registration applications are available in English and Spanish languages and can be completed by anyone visiting a Michigan DHS office.

"Compliance with the National Voter Registration Act is not just another federal mandate," DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said. "It is a key component for empowering families to become equipped to act on their own behalf and to take part in public debate. Not only is this an essential component of an individual family's movement toward self-sufficiency, it is also

absolutely necessary if we hope to develop our democracy."

For more information go to www.michigan.gov/dhs

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Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet or Janice Berry (517) 373-7394

More DHS employees feted with Star Awards by Michigan Department of Human Services

April 3, 2008

Twelve additional DHS employees, all members of the Bridges Test Team, earned Star Awards from Michigan Department of Human Services. The awards were presented during the department's annual employee award program April 1 in Lansing.

"Star Award winners represent the best and brightest," DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said. "These people go above and beyond to help coworkers, their clients and the public better access benefits in our system. They help define the DHS as an engine for good in Michigan."

The Bridges Test Team tested applications on the upcoming Bridges eligibility and payment program to determine its fit for employees and to help debug problems before the computerized application goes online. The 12

additional team members are listed alphabetically by hometown:

- Darlene Salk from Allentown.
- Ann Chapaton from Armada.
- Mary Jenkins from Eaton Rapids.
- John Stafford from Ferrysburg.
- Kathleen Pabst from Grand Ledge.
- Jane Leask from Holt.
- Michael Criner, Lou Ann Macauley and Patti Patterson from Lansing.
- Candy Calvert from Leslie.
- Kim Thelen from Pewamo.
- Abbe Mulholland from Webberville.

For more information, go to the DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/dhs

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